WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Sub AL 1   1. A trade records information management system for

2 storing, searching, and retrieving data pertaining to financial

3 transactions, comprising:

4   a central data storage means maintained at a regional

5 processing center, the central data storage means including means

6 for storing bit mapped images, relational database means for

7 storing ASCII information about the bit mapped images and means

8 for storing messages and completed inquiries;

9   a plurality of customer service units that are remote from

10 the regional processing center, each customer service unit having

11 local data storage means maintained at the customer service

12 units, the local data storage means including means for storing

13 bit mapped images and means for storing messages and completed

14 inquiries;

15   a wide area network connecting the regional processing

16 center with each of the plurality of customer service units;

17   gateway means located at the regional processing center, for

18 linking the central data storage means with the local data

19 storage means at each of the customer service units and linking

20 the wide area network to other networks;

21   means for inputting data into the central data storage means

22 from a plurality of sources, said means including means for

23 creating and inputting bit mapped images of hard copy documents;

24   means for indexing input data in the central data storage

25 means and creating a transaction data folder, each transaction

26 data folder containing a unique identifier and a bit mapped image

.27 file containing the image of at least one hard copy document.

1   2.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising:

3   means for searching the data storage means in response to

4 structured queries and identifying records that match said

5 queries.

1   3.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 2, further comprising: graphic user interface means for allowing

3 users to build said structured queries.

1   4.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising: means for allowing one user to monitor

3 another user's work-in-process at any time to monitor the backlog

4 and assigned levels of work and means for assigning monitoring

5 privileges to select users.

1   5.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising: means for displaying data in the internal

3 data storage means so as to enable the data folder to be

4 reviewed.

1   6.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising: means for assigning a transaction data

3 folder to a particular user based upon a predetermined routing

4 procedure.

1   7.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising means for creating a work queue for

3 individual users.

1   8.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising means for allowing users to exchange

3 database data through a network.

1   9.   The trade records information management system of claim

2 1, further comprising means for maintaining an internal unique

3 key identifier to identify each transaction data folder and

4 document with the image transaction ID number unique to each item

5 when available from the image management system.

1   10. The trade records information management system of

2 claim 1, wherein transaction folders can be accessed by customer

3 service representatives at any network location.

1   11. The trade records information management system of

2 claim 1, further comprising: means for allowing users to place

3 any documents into one or more folders of the user's choice.

1   12. The trade records information management system of

2 claim 1, further comprising: means for retrieving identified data

3 records from the central data storage means in response to

4 structured queries and replicating data records retrieved from

5 the central data storage means in the local data storage means.

1   13. The trade records information management system for

2 storing, searching, and retrieving data pertaining to financial

3 transactions of claim 1, further comprising:

4   a plurality of regional processing centers, each regional

5 processing center having central data storage means maintained at

6 the regional processing center, the central data storage means

7 including means for storing bit mapped images, relational

8 database means for storing ASCII information about the bit mapped

9 images and means for storing messages and completed inquiries;

10   a plurality of customer service units that are associated

11 with and remote from each of the regional processing centers,

12 each customer service unit having local data storage means

13 maintained at the customer service units;

14   a wide area network connecting the plurality of regional

15 processing centers with each other and with a plurality of

16 customer service units; and

17   gateway means located at each of the regional processing

18 centers, for linking the central data storage means with the

19 local data storage means at each of the customer service units

20 and linking the wide area network to other networks.

-59-

1   14.   A process of trade records information management
2 system for storing, searching, and retrieving data pertaining to
3 financial transactions, comprising the steps of: preprocessing
4 inbound paper-based documents including scanning the inbound
5 paper-based documents and indexing the inbound paper-based
6 documents; storing bit mapped images, storing ASCII information
7 about the bit mapped images and storing messages and completed
8 inquiries; inputting data into a central data storage means from
9 a plurality of sources, indexing input data in the central data
10 storage means and creating a transaction data folder, each
11 transaction data folder containing a unique identifier and a bit
12 mapped image file containing the image of at least one hard copy
13 document.

1   15.   The process of trade records information management of
2 claim 14, further comprising the step of assigning a transaction
3 data folder to a particular user based upon predetermined routing
4 rules.

1   16.   The process of trade records information management of
2 claim 14, further comprising the step of creating a queue for a
3 particular user, the queue containing documents and inquiries for
4 processing.

1   17.   The process of trade records information management of

2 claim 14, further comprising the step of monitoring document work

3 flow for backlog and assigned work levels.

1   18.   The process of trade records information management of

2 claim 14, further comprising the step of connecting the regional

3 processing center with each of the plurality of customer service

4 units through a wide area network linking the central data

5 storage means with the local data storage means at each of the

6 customer service units and linking the wide area network to other

7 networks to allow data communication between said data storage

8 means and said networks.

1   19.   The process of trade records information management of

2 claim 14, further comprising the step of searching the data

3 storage means in response to structured queries and identifying

4 records that match said queries.

1   20.   The process of trade records information management of

2 claim 14, further comprising the step of maintaining an internal

3 unique key identifier to identify each transaction data folder

4 and document with the image transaction ID number unique to each

5 item when available from the image management system.